

LA LETTRE

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A NEW CHAIR

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SPECIAL REPORT

La Chrysalide:
a space for playing,
meeting others and
supporting parenthood

association **Asmae**
Soeur Emmanuelle
Agir pour l'enfance défavorisée



Sister Emmanuelle with two young rag-and-bone collectors in the Suez Canal (Egypt)

For 38 years, Asmae has been continuing the work of its founder, following her principles.

OUR VISION

“A fair world where children are guaranteed the opportunity to live and grow up in dignity within their families and their environments to become free men and women who can contribute to society.”

OUR MISSIONS

- * To promote child development through a global approach. To do this, Asmae also works to support families, with their environments in mind.
- * To increase the capabilities of local stakeholders in the area of child development, to improve the synergy between them and to maximise their social impact.
- * To champion children's causes by raising awareness and speaking out.
- * To experiment, to expand and to disseminate.

OUR VALUES

- * Trust * Commitment * An Ideal of Justice * Freedom * Respect * Solidarity

ASMAE EN CHIFFRES

- * **45,000** beneficiaries (children and families) through **86** projects in **8** countries
- * **1,100** sponsors
- * **59** local partners
- * **110** professionals worldwide
- * **103** volunteers in France and on international solidarity sites



Editorial

2021 TARGET Get involved!

It all began with a challenge. Sister Emmanuelle was not allowed by her superiors to teach the most disadvantaged children, as she wished. It was only at retirement age that she was given permission to live as “a rag-and-bone collector among the rag-and-bone collectors” of one of Cairo's slums. For eight years, she shared their daily life, their ups and their downs.



© Asmae

Alain Barrau

Outraged by their situation, Sister Emmanuelle committed herself to changing their living conditions and the way they were viewed by society. This led her to found the Asmae association, which has been continuing her fight for the past 38 years. The association conveys her vision of a society where each person is a participant with the ability to act positively on their environment. By placing the education and protection of children at the heart of her action, Sister Emmanuelle wanted to act for the most vulnerable, those who become the actors of tomorrow and carry our hopes for a fair and more tolerant world.

The challenge Asmae faces consists of guaranteeing education and protection, regardless of the situation children find themselves in. While States may be proving to be ineffective in this regard, civil society initiatives are emerging. These are local actors that must be supported, structured, trained, connected, in order to give them the power to act and to push back injustice in their countries.

Equipped with an extensive knowledge of our areas of intervention and a proven method, we have the will to go the extra distance to reinforce the impact of our action, both where we are already present and in new countries.

To carry our ambition and bring Sister Emmanuelle's message to life, we will be launching the Sister Emmanuelle Foundation under the aegis of the Caritas Foundation. Its mission will be to soon become incorporated within Asmae.

I am taking over from Sabine Gindre in this critical period and would like to firstly thank her, on my own behalf and that of the association, for the commitment she has shown during her time as chair. I will endeavour to follow in her footsteps.

Your support is crucial. Join us, join Sister Emmanuelle,

GET INVOLVED!

Yalla!

Alain Barrau

Chair of Asmae

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THREE QUESTIONS FOR SABINE GINDRE, ASMAE CHAIR, AT THE END OF HER MANDATE

In November 2017, the members of the Board of Directors elected a new Chair at Asmae's helm. Sabine Gindre recalls the highlights of her mandate as she hands over the reins to Alain Barrau.

* WHY DID YOU AGREE TO TAKE ON THE CHAIRPERSONSHIP OF ASMAE?

While I was overwhelmed as I had not foreseen it, I was proud to become chair and, above all, enthusiastic. The Asmae cause echoed my own outrage at seeing children living in misery and exclusion, and my desire to act. I had also already been committed to Asmae for 8 years, both with our Lebanese partner AFEL and working with young mothers at La Chrysalide. This had allowed me to experience the wealth of experience within Asmae, the potential of its team and its partnership-based approach. I believe in enabling children to hold their future in their own hands, and I therefore launched myself wholeheartedly into the adventure.

* WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHANGES THAT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED DURING SIX YEARS OF LEADERSHIP?

Since Sister Emmanuelle's death, Asmae had become weakened and was under threat financially. In order to move forward and free itself from its founder, we had to breathe new life into the association, improve its structure while preserving the spirit of Sister Emmanuelle. We therefore undertook a major consultation with all the association's stakeholders in order to assert a strong vision, shared values and proven principles

of action. By developing an ambitious financial strategy and turning to new fields, Asmae has also been able to obtain new resources. This has led us to refocus our interventions on Education and Child Protection, to create a base in France and to strengthen the local partner relationship.

* ON A PERSONAL LEVEL, WHAT HAVE BEEN THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR MANDATE?

Above all, I have been moved and impressed by all these incredible encounters with the children, families, our partners, volunteers and professionals. An extraordinary welcome awaited me on my travels in the field. There were also many work sessions, often impassioned, that allowed me to appreciate all the energy that is expended on progressing, inventing, listening and respecting others - Asmae's true DNA.

Not forgetting the fantastic communication campaigns and the successes related to obtaining institutional funding support, the real door-opener for rolling out new projects: supporting children with disabilities in Madagascar, Syrian children in Lebanon, children from families living in hotels in Seine-Saint-Denis, assisting a residents' group in East Paris, etc.

While there are children living on the streets, we must act...



Sabine Gindre during a visit to partners in India.

"I have been moved and impressed by all these incredible encounters with the children, families, our partners, volunteers and professionals. An extraordinary welcome awaited me on my travels in the field."
Sabine Gindre.

LA CHRYSALIDE: A SPACE FOR PLAYING, MEETING OTHERS AND SUPPORTING PARENTHOOD FOR FAMILIES IN THE TOWN OF BOBIGNY.

Key figures for La Chrysalide (Bobigny facility)

- 81 direct beneficiaries
- 24 families and 31 children were supported in 2016

Opened in 2006, La Chrysalide is a parent-and-child space which is inspired by the work carried out in the Maisons Vertes created by Françoise Dolto; it offers assistance with parenthood. It is a place for support, discussion, meeting others, and is open to children aged 0 to 4, accompanied by their parents. It aims to support the parent-child relationship through shared moments of play. This place also prepares children to be separated from their parents, and contributes to children becoming independent and socialised.

The aims of this space are:

- * To offer a place where children and parents are listened to and supported
- * To support parents in their parental abilities: increasing awareness, talking, unravelling any relationship difficulties with their children
- * To assist with the process of children becoming individuals in a secure environment, so that they can gradually be apart from their parents for longer. The role of Asmae support workers as third parties enables the parent-child relationship to be mediated.
- * To enable parents to look at their children in a new way, in a different setting, in contact with other adults and children, and to become aware of their abilities
- * To promote discussion between parents and relationships between children / to provide a space for socialisation
- * To also offer families a setting in which to hang out, take a breather, have an enjoyable time with no specific issues.

The Asmae teams make sure that a warm, generous, respectful, tolerant and emotionally secure environment is created within this space. Open three times a week, this space is intended for all families from the mother-and-child centre and all families from the town of Bobigny. **In 2016, 162 two-hour sessions were held, where 24 families and 31 children took part in several sessions over the course of the year.**

SUPPORT WORKERS WHO ARE THERE TO LISTEN AND A PLACE THAT PARENTS ENJOY COMING TO WITH THEIR CHILDREN!

As soon as they cross the threshold, the multidisciplinary team comprising one psychologist and two early years educators are attentive and respectful towards all parents, regardless of their age and background.

* **FABIENNE MARTIN, EARLY YEARS EDUCATOR, TALKS TO US ABOUT HER WORK.**

What does your work involve?

Being a support worker in the parent-and-child space is a specific role: being present for children and their parents, particularly mothers, supporting their relationships and exchanges without judgement or prejudice, promoting discussion between parents so that they too are able to offer solutions to the questions asked, so that they can share their experience. The aim is not to intervene at all costs, but rather to indicate progress, each child's strengths, to ease worries and anxieties without giving preconceived "formulas".

How many children do you support?

It depends on the session. There is no advance enrolment, so it can vary from just one child (and their parent) to 7 or 8 families. The feel of the group changes accordingly, of course!

What type of relationship do you build with the children?

We are present to support and encourage them, to offer them equipment, to respond their requests for assistance, while encouraging them to always go back to their parent. We don't do activities with them. Free play is the only aid we use.

And with the parents?

We are there to listen to them, to reassure and comfort them in their role as parents. We talk informally with them, answer their questions and encourage discussion between them to avoid positioning ourselves as the early childhood "specialist".

What kind of topics are usually addressed?

Any topic related to childhood: sleep, food, separation, language, games and toys, childcare options, schooling, psycho-motor development, sibling jealousy, etc.

Any topic related to life as a parent and/or woman: isolation, distance from family, wanting to go back to work, fear of educational mistakes, the father's role, influence of different advice (Internet, friends, family members), difficulty finding a work-life balance, life as a couple and as parents, etc.

Can you describe a typical day?

It is varied, because the sessions last no more than 2 hours. The families arrive and leave when they want to, within the start and finish times. There is of course a quick welcome and then free play among children and parents. Then the families help us to tidy up and leave to go home.

How has the activity of the Parent-and-Child Space developed since it opened?

To begin with, this space was only open to families from the mother-and-child centre.

For the past few years, the parent-and-child space has been open to families from the town, one session at first and now two sessions a week. **This meets a real need in Bobigny and allows families to mix together very well. This really enriches the discussions between the mothers who attend.**

"It is a place where the parents can meet other adults and the child benefits from a rich interpersonal space shared with other adults and other children".

Philippe Lorin, Manager of the Crèche and Parent-and-Child Space

"I discovered the Parent-and-Child Space run by Asmae two months ago. This space offers a lot to my daughter and I. It's great to meet and talk with other parents. We feel more reassured in our role as parents. I'm happy that my daughter is able to spend time in a different environment. Anaïs really likes this space because there are lots of toys and other children. The support workers are very warm, cheerful and happy to help."

Mrs Ekchout, the mother of Anaïs.



Mrs Ekchout, the mother of Anaïs.

Address and opening times for the L'île aux enfants

No need to enrol - Free, anonymous group

Tuesdays, 17:00 to 18:45 - Wednesdays, 15:30 to 17:30 (excluding school holidays)

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MADAGASCAR: COMBATTING EDUCATIONAL EXCLUSION

According to a study conducted by Unicef¹, one million Madagascan children aged 6 to 10 are excluded from education in Madagascar.

There are many reasons for educational exclusion: the parents' financial difficulties, the child's disability, low quality of education available, inaccessibility of schools, etc. Faced with education's many challenges in Madagascar, since 2016 Asmae has been supporting HARDI and MANDA, two local associations that are working for the quality and sustainability of educational management as part of the project known as:

“Promotion of education for vulnerable children excluded from the formal educations system in Antananarivo”. The priority goal of the project is to keep children in school using different focus areas: improved literacy levels and learning outcomes for children aged between 7 and 18, reinforced socio-educational integration mechanisms, consolidated technical and management capacity of three partner associations in order to make their activities for these children more sustainable.

In 2017, the project welcomed a third local association, Kozama. It expressed its need for educational support in its actions for children with severe learning difficulties. Launched in 2016, this project benefits from co-financing from the European Union over the 2016-2018 period and from the French Development Agency between 2017 and 2020.

Project beneficiaries

- 3 local associations
- 861 children aged between 7 and 18
- 1,000 parents
- 15 education professionals

COMBATTING EDUCATIONAL EXCLUSION AND WASTAGE, INNOVATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY TEACHING METHODS

★ In Madagascar, many actors are mobilising to combat educational wastage and to reintegrate children into the formal school system. This access to schooling is offered in many forms, including literacy classes: these are “gateway” classes designed to allow children who have dropped out of the formal school system to catch up, and to provide schooling for children who have never attended (due to the absence of a copy of their birth certificate, social exclusion or access problems). In Antananarivo, our partners' classes benefit the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children, living in deprived neighbourhoods (in very precarious dwellings liable to flooding) or on the streets.

As part of this action, Asmae provides associations with a Literacy Technical Advisor who supports the educators to enhance their teaching skills and equip them with tools adapted to the needs of the children. The subjects addressed focus on the implementation of an active and participatory teaching approach, where children act for

themselves and construct their own learning. At the end of the project's first two years, the results are very positive: the educators who have been supported have all highlighted the relevance of the support from the Technical Advisor appointed by Asmae (improved teaching skills, easier class management and application of new teaching methods). At the beginning of 2018, the literacy tools that have been developed as part of this project (the Vowel family, Sary Fetsy picture book, manual of technical sheets, etc.) will be shared with Asmae's different partners in Madagascar.

In order to identify the levers and activities to be put in place to improve the handling of children supported, a **study on the factors involved in pupils dropping out and staying in school** has been launched as part of this project. It will be completed in March 2018 and will provide clues to those working with children in order to help combat school drop-out.

The teachers make sure that the children receive individual support based on their particular issues and abilities. As teachers, we are developing children so that they become responsible adults; we make them aware of life skills and personal care, we get them used to the school routine so that they are successfully reintegrated into EPP* later on. We are working in collaboration with Asmae's Technical Advisor to look for new methods and working tools adapted to these children. This support is really important for us.

Nicole Ramanantenaso and Hanta Randrianaivoson
Literacy class teachers - HARDI NGO

EPP* École primaire publique (State Primary School)



PROMOTING GLOBAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT USING SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

★ Since June 2016, a Technical Advisor in Specialised Education, appointed by Asmae, has been training the teachers from HARDI, Manda and Kozama. Tools have been created and developed with teachers, such as:

- The Personalised Education Plan (Le Projet Éducatif Individualisé, PEI): a tool used by the teachers which provides a global view of the child's situation, and in which educational goals are recorded that are defined for that individual child.
- An illustrated "Support Guide for Children with Severe Learning Difficulties" (Guide d'accompagnement des enfants en Grandes Difficultés d'Apprentissage, GDA), designed for teachers.
- A reference document for observing social behaviours, enabling teachers to measure the progress children make in terms of personal care, human relationships, motor skills, etc.

The Technical Advisor in Specialised Education has provided support for teachers from Kozama to introduce a training module for dealing with severe learning difficulties. This training has been delivered to many actors.

The results of this activity are also very positive. Local associations have a better knowledge of the different aspects involved in supporting a child. Before, teachers were focused solely on the educational side. Now, they are attentive to the other elements (which impact on the school side significantly) and have improved the way they support groups with different needs. In addition, the teachers have developed new resources and tools to ensure the sustainability of actions put in place, even after the departure of Asmae's Technical Advisors.

I. Educational exclusion and means of inclusion in primary education in Madagascar, Unicef, 2012



"I went to summer camp in Morondava and had a great time. I also got to visit Morondava village and the seaside. I was very happy, it was the first time I'd seen the sea and it changed something inside me and that changes my everyday life. It opens your mind and at the same time we enjoy the holidays."

Odia, age 16, student in the ASAMA class run by the Hardi NGO

Project status update

Spotlight on the project run in Lebanon with the support of the French Development Agency

End of the project to provide "educational and psychosocial support to children and families from host communities and Syrian refugees in Lebanon".

On 30 June 2017, Asmae closed this project, which ran over 3 years in partnership with two local associations: ALPHA and ACH. During the 3rd and final year of the project, 562 children benefited from after-school tutoring, play and recreational activities, and 153 received individual psychological support. Discussion groups for parents brought adults together and, what is more, brought Lebanese and Syrian communities together by enabling each to express their feelings surrounding tensions experienced between host and refugee populations. Two child protection committees were set up in south Lebanon. Asmae's assistance came in the form of financial and technical support. 2 Technical Advisors appointed by Asmae assisted these 2 local associations in terms of capacity-building for professionals and an improvement in the quality of educational content.



This project is co-financed by the AFD. The content of the publication comes under the sole responsibility of Asmae - Association Sœur Emmanuelle and cannot be considered to reflect the opinion of the Agence Française de Développement in any way.

I'm in, you're in, they're in... We're all in to support children's future!

General Meeting

The association's Annual General Meeting will be held in Paris on Saturday 2nd June, 2018. This will be the opportunity for all members to discuss the 2017 review and the main priorities for 2018. This AGM is an important chance to find out more about the association's actions. For more information, contact us on +33 (0)1 70 32 02 50 or by email at apichon@asmae.fr.

Raise awareness of children's rights among your pupils

"Yalla! For children's rights" is a project aiming to raise awareness in school institutions, as part of an initiative to educate pupils on the subjects of citizenship and international solidarity. Interactive, participatory and run in collaboration with education teams, it provides the opportunity to offer pupils an introduction to international solidarity by raising their awareness of their rights and of how these are unequally applied in France and all over the world. To sign your school up or to find out more, contact us on +33 (0)1 70 32 02 50 or by email at sensibilisation@asmae.fr.

Solidarity initiatives in the region

By mobilising my energy, my time and those around me, I am setting up solidarity initiatives that enable people to learn about the association and/or fund raise for our projects.

A few examples:

- Private viewing, exhibition
- Car boot sale or bric-a-brac stall
- Theatre performance, concerts
- Donations at personal events, etc.

**For more information,
contact us on +33 (0)1 70 32 02 50
or by email at apichon@asmae.fr.**



3 questions for Minke van Rees,

Director of the "Education and Nature" department at the Turing Foundation.

The Turing Foundation has been supporting our inclusive education project in Burkina Faso since 2017.

Why did you decide to support Asmae?

We want to improve the level of education in countries like Burkina Faso. This is the objective of the project that Turing is supporting. It is about using play-based education methods to achieve better learning outcomes. Another reason that influenced our decision was the demonstration of existing feasibility and this project intends to maintain it. The final factor I would like to mention is Asmae's effort to involve local communities. They must feel that Asmae's project is also their own and, for us, this is the only way to have a long-lasting impact.

Why is education an important subject for you?

We are convinced that education is the best tool for improving a person's living conditions, now and for their future. It broadens the range of opportunity and shows children that there is more to life and that they can accomplish more. Recently, we have focused our attention on teacher training and vocational training. Helping people to become better teachers and training more teachers will have a direct impact on the level of education.

What advice would you give to other foundations that would like to support Asmae?

If you are passionate about education and devoted to the cause of women and children, Asmae is a very good partner to work with. They work closely with local partners to ensure local commitment and involvement. They are committed to capacity building so that local partners can continue the work with the children in the future, long after Asmae has left.

Find all our latest news at:

www.asmae.fr •  •  •  • 

association **Asmae**
Soeur Emmanuelle

Agir pour l'enfance défavorisée

Association formed under the French law of 1901 -
Recognised to be of public interest

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